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Playboy Interview with The Beatles:
A candid conversation with England's mop-topped millionaire minstrels
Interviewed by Jean Shepherd
February 1965 issue
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(continued)

JOHN: *If you say you're non-religious, people assume you're antireligious. We're not sure what we are, but we're more agnostic than atheistic.*

PLAYBOY: "By the way, what are Beatle people?"

JOHN: "It's something they use in the fan mags in America. They all start out, 'Hi there, Beatle people, 'spect you're wondering what the Fab Foursome are doing these days!' Now we use it all the time, too."

PAUL: "It's low-level journalese."

JOHN: "But I mean, you know, there's nothing wrong with that, It's harmless."

PLAYBOY: "Speaking of low-level journalese, there was a comment in one of the London papers the other day that paralleled you guys with Hitler. Seriously! It said that you have the same technique of drawing cheers from the crowd..."

PAUL: "That power isn't so much us being like Hitler; it's that the audiences and the show have got a sort of, you know, Hitler feel about them, because the audience will shout when their told to. That's what the critic was talking about. Actually, that article was one which I really got annoyed about, 'cuz she's never even met us."

PLAYBOY: "She?"

PAUL: "The woman who wrote it. She's never met us, but she was dead against us. Like that Hitler bit. And she said we were

very boring people. 'The Boresome Foursome,' she called us. You know, really, this woman was really just shouting her mouth off about us... as people, I mean."

RINGO: "Oh, come on."

PAUL: "No, you come on. I rang up the newspaper, you know, but they wouldn't let me speak to her. In actual fact, they said, 'Well, I'll tell you, the reason we don't give out her phone number is because she never likes to speak to people on the phone because she's got a terrible stutter. So I never did actually follow it up. Felt sorry for her. But I mean, the cheek of her, writing this damn article about us. And telling everybody how we're starting riots, and how we're such bores... and she's never even met us, mind you! I mean, we could turn around and say the same about her! I could go and thump her!"

GEORGE: "Bastard fascist!"

PLAYBOY: "Ringo..."

RINGO: "Yes, PLAYBOY, sir?"

PLAYBOY: "How do you feel about the press? Has your attitude changed in the last year or so?"

RINGO: "Yes."

PLAYBOY: "In what way?"

RINGO: "I hate 'em more now than I did before."

PLAYBOY: "Did you hear about the riot in Glasgow on the night of your last show there?"

JOHN: "We heard about it after."

PLAYBOY: "Did you know that the next day there was a letter in one of the Glasgow papers that accused you of directly 'inciting' the violence?"

RINGO: "How can they say that about us We don't even wiggle. It's not bloody fair."

GEORGE: "Bastards!"

PAUL: "Glasgow is like Belfast. There'll probably be a bit of a skirmish there, too. But not because of us. It's because people in certain cities just hate the cops more than in other cities."

GEORGE: "Right."

PAUL: "There were ridiculous riots last time we were there... but it wasn't riots for us. The crowd was there for us, but the riots after the show..."

RINGO: "All the drunks come out, out of the pubs."

PAUL: "...it was just beatin' up coppers."

PLAYBOY: "They just used the occasion as a pretext to get at the cops?"

GEORGE: "Yeah."

PAUL: "In Dublin this trip, did you see where the crowd sort of stopped all the traffic? They even pulled a driver out of a bus."

JOHN: "They also called out the fire brigade. We had four fire engines this time."

PLAYBOY: "People were also overturning cars and breaking shop windows. But all this had nothing to do with your show?"

PAUL: "Well, it's vaguely related, I suppose. It's got something to do with us, inasmuch as the crowds happen to be there because of our show."

JOHN: "But nobody who's got a bit of common sense would seriously think that 15-year-old girls are going around smashing shop windows on account of us."

GEORGE: "Certainly not. Those girls are 'eight' years old."

PLAYBOY: "This talk of violence leads to a related question. Do you guys think there'll be a war soon?"

GEORGE: "Yeah. Friday."

RINGO: "I hope not. Not just after we've got our money through the taxes."

JOHN: "The trouble is, if they do start another war, then everybody goes with you."

PLAYBOY: "Do you think the Rolling Stones will be the first to go?"

PAUL: "It won't matter, 'cuz we'll probably be in London or Liverpool at the time, and when they drop the bomb, it'll be in the middle of the city. So we probably won't even know it when it happens."

PLAYBOY: "We brought this up for a reason, fellows. There was an essay not long ago in a very serious commentary magazine, saying that before every major war in this century, there had been a major wave of public hysteria over certain specific entertainers. There was the Irene Castle craze before World War One..."

PAUL: "Oh yes."

GEORGE: "I remember that well."

PLAYBOY: "And then, before World War Two, there was the swing craze with Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, and all the dancing in the aisles. And now you--- before...."

JOHN: "Hold on! It's not our fault!"

PLAYBOY: "We're not saying you may have anything to do with inciting a war..."

PAUL: "Thanks."

PLAYBOY: "But don't you think you may be a symptom of the times, part of an undercurrent that's building up?"

PAUL: "That sort of comparison just falls down when you look at it, really. It's just like saying that this morning a fly landed on my bed and that I looked at my watch and it was eight o'clock, and that therefore every morning at eight o'clock flies land on the bed. It doesn't prove anything just 'cuz it happens a few times."

PLAYBOY: "Let's move on to another observation about you. Did you know that the Duke of Edinburgh was recently quoted as saying that he thought you were on the way out?"

JOHN: "Good luck, Duke."

GEORGE: "No comment. See my manager."

PAUL: "He didn't say it, though. There was a retraction, wasn't there?"

JOHN: "Yeah, we got a telegram. Wonderful news."

PAUL: "We sent one back. Addressed to 'Liz and Phil.'"

PLAYBOY: "Have you ever met the Queen?"

JOHN: "No. She's the only one we haven't met. We've met all the others."

PAUL: "All the mainstays."

PLAYBOY: "Winston Chirchill?"

RINGO: "No, not him."

JOHN: "He's a good lad, though."

PLAYBOY: "Would you like to meet him?"

GEORGE:" Not really. Not more than anybody else."

PAUL: "I dunno. Somebody like that you wish you could have met when he was at his peak, you know, and sort of doing things and being great. But there wouldn't be alot of point now, because he's sort of gone into retirement and doesn't do alot of things anymore."

PLAYBOY: "Is there any celebrity you would like to meet?"

PAUL: "I wouldn't mind meeting Adolf Hitler."

GEROGE: "You could have every room in your house papered."

PLAYBOY: "Would you like to meet Princess Margaret?"

PAUL: "We have."

PLAYBOY: "How do you like her?"

RINGO: " "OK. And Philip's OK, too."

PLAYBOY: "Even after what he supposedly said about you?"

RINGO: "I don't care what he said, I still think he's OK. He didn't say nothing about me personally."

PAUL: "Even if he had said things about us, it doesn't make him worse, you know."

PLAYBOY: "Speaking of royalty..."

PAUL: "Royalty never condemns anything unless it's something that they know everybody else condemns."

RINGO: "If I was royal..."

PAUL: "If I was royal, I would crack long jokes and get a mighty laugh... if I was royal."

GEORGE: "What would 'we' do with Buckingham Palace? Royalty's stupid."

PLAYBOY: "You guys seem to be pretty irreverent characters. Are any of you churchgoers?"

JOHN: "No."

GEORGE: "No."

PAUL: "Not particularly. But we're not antireligious. We probably seem antireligious because of the fact that none of us believe in God."

JOHN: "If you say you don't believe in God, everybody assumes you're antireligious, and you probably think that's what we mean by that. We're not quite sure 'what' we are, but I know that we're more agnostic than atheistic."

PLAYBOY: "Are you speaking for the group, or just for yourself."

JOHN: "For the group."

GEORGE: "John's our official religious spokesman."

PAUL: "We all feel roughly the same. We're all agnostics."

JOHN: "Most people are, anyway."

RINGO: "It's better to admit it than to be a hypocrite."

JOHN: "The only thing we've got against religion is the hypocritical side of it, which I can't stand. Like the clergy is always moaning about people being poor, while they themselves are all going around with millions of quid worth of robes on. That's the stuff I can't stand."

PAUL: "A new bronze door stuck on the Vatican."

RINGO: "Must have cost a mighty penny."

PAUL: "But believe it or not, we're not anti-Christ."

RINGO: "Just anti-Pope and anti-christian."

PAUL: "But you know, in America..."

GEORGE: "They were more shocked by us saying we were agnostics."

JOHN: "Then they went potty; they couldn't take it. Same as in Australia, where they couldn't stand us not liking sports."

PAUL: "In America, they're fanatical about God. I know somebody over there who said he was an atheist. The papers nearly refused to print it because it was such shocking news that somebody could actually be an atheist... yeah... and admit it."

RINGO: "He speaks for all of us."

PLAYBOY: "To bring up another topic that's shocking to some, how do you feel about the homosexual problem?"

GEORGE: "Oh yeah, well, we're all homosexuals, too."

RINGO: "Yeah, we're all queer."

PAUL: "But don't tell anyone."

PLAYBOY: "Seriously, is there more homosexuality in England than elsewhere?"

JOHN: "Are you saying there's more over here than in America?"

PLAYBOY: "We're just asking."

GEORGE: "It's just that they've got crewcuts in America. You can't spot 'em."

PAUL: "There's probably a million more queers in America than in England. England may have it's scandals... like Profumo and all... but at least they're heterosexual."

JOHN: "Still, we do have more than our share of queers, don't you think?"

PAUL: "It just seems that way because there's more printed about them over here."

RINGO: "If they find out somebody is a bit bent, the press will always splash it about."

PAUL: "Right. Take Profumo, for example. He's just an ordinary..."

RINGO: "...sex maniac."

PAUL: "...just an ordinary fellow who sleeps with women. Yet it's adultery in the eyes of the law, and it's an international incident. But in actual fact, if you check up on the statistics, you find that there are hardly any married men who've been completely faithful to their wives."

JOHN: "I have! Listen, Beatle people..."

PAUL: "Alright, we all know John's spotless. But when a thing like that gets into the newspapers, everybody goes very, very Puritan, and they pretend that they don't know what sex is about."

GEORGE: "They get so bloody virtuous all of a sudden."

PAUL: "Yes, and some poor heel has got to take the brunt of the whole thing. But in actual fact, If you ask the average Briton what they really think of the Profumo case, they'd probably say, 'He was knockin' off some bird. So what?'"

PLAYBOY: "Incidentally, you've met Mandy Rice-Davies haven't you?"

GEORGE: "What are you looking at 'me' for?"

PLAYBOY: "Because we hear she was looking at you."

JOHN: "We did meet Christine Keeler."

RINGO: "I'll tell you who I met. I met whats-her-name... April Ashley."

JOHN: "I met her, too, the other night."

PLAYBOY: "Isn't she the one who used to be a man, changed her sex and married into nobility?"

JOHN: "That's the one."

RINGO: "She swears at me, you know. But when she sobers up she apologizes."

JOHN: "Actually, I quite like her. Him. It. That."

PAUL: "The problem with saying something like, 'Profumo was just a victim of circumstances' or 'April Ashley isn't so bad, even though she's changed sex' -- saying things like that in print to most people seems so shocking; whereas in actual fact, if you really think about it, it isn't. Just saying things like that sounds much more shocking than it is."

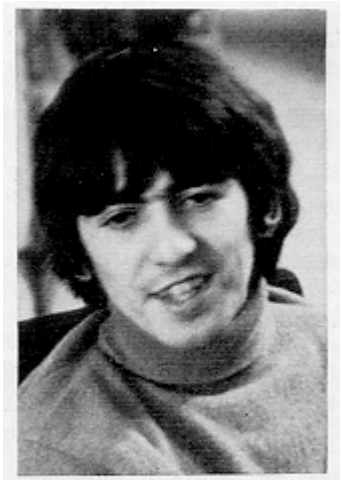
RINGO: "I got up in the Ad Lib the other night and a big handbag hit me in the gut. I thought it was somebody I knew; I didn't have my glasses on. I said, 'Hello,' and a bloody big worker went 'Arrgghhh.' So I just ran into the bog... because I'd heard about things like that."

PLAYBOY: "What are you talking about?"

GEORGE: "He doesn't know."

PLAYBOY: "Do you?"

GEORGE: "Haven't the slightest."



GEORGE: *Ringo and I are gettin' married to each other. But that's a thing you better keep a secret. People would probably think we're queers.*

PLAYBOY: "Can you give us a hint, Ringo? What's the Ad Lib, for example?"

RINGO: "It's a club."

GEORGE: "Like your Peppermint Lounge and the Whiskey-a-Go-go. It's the same thing."

PAUL: " No, the English version is a little different."

JOHN: "The Whiskey-a-Go-go is exactly the same, isn't it? ...only they have someone dancing on the ceiling, don't they?"

GEORGE: "Don't be ridiculous. They have 'two' girls dancing on the roof. In the Ad Lib they have a colored chap. That's the difference."

PLAYBOY: "We heard a rumor that one of you was thinking about opening a club."

JOHN: "I wonder who that was, Ringo."

RINGO: "I don't know, John. There was a rumor, yes. I heard that one, too."

PLAYBOY: "Is there any truth to it?"

RINGO: "Well, yes. We were going to open one in Hollywood, but it fell through."

JOHN: "Dino wouldn't let you take the place over."

RINGO: "No."

PAUL: "And we decided it's not worth it. So we decided to sit tight for six months, and then buy..."

GEORGE: "...America."

PLAYBOY: "Have you heard about the Playboy Club that's opening in London?"

RINGO: "Yes. I've heard about it."

PLAYBOY: "What do you think of our Clubs?"

RINGO: "They're for dirty old men, not for the likes of us-- dirty young men. They're for businessmen that sneak out without their

wives knowing, or if their wives sneak out first, or those who go out openly."

GEORGE: "There's no real fun in a Bunny's fluffy tail."

PLAYBOY: "Then you don't think a Club will make it here?"

GEORGE: "Oh yes, 'course it will."

RINGO: "There's enough dirty old men here."

PLAYBOY: "Have you ever read the magazine?"

JOHN: "Yes."

GEORGE: "Yes."

RINGO: "I get my copy every month. Tits."

PLAYBOY: "Do you read any of the philosophy, any of you?"

PAUL: "Some of it. When the journey's really long and you can't last out the pictures, you start reading it. It's OK."

PLAYBOY: "How about Playboy's Jazz Poll? Do you read it, too?"

JOHN: "Occasionally."

PLAYBOY: "Do you enjoy jazz, any of you?"

GEORGE: "What kind?"

PLAYBOY: "American jazz."

JOHN: "Who, for example?"

PLAYBOY: "You tell us."

PAUL: "We only dig those who dig us."

PLAYBOY: "Seriously, who? Anyone?"

JOHN: "Getz. But only because somebody gave me an album of his... with him and somebody called Iguana, or something like that."

PLAYBOY: "You mean Joao Gilberto?"

JOHN: "I don't know. Some Mexican."

PLAYBOY: "He's Brazilian."

JOHN: "Oh."

PLAYBOY: "Are you guys getting tired of talking?"

JOHN: "No."

PAUL: "No. Let's order some drinks. Scotch or Coke?"

JOHN: "I'll have chocolate."

GEORGE: "Scotch for me and Paul... and chocolate for the Beatle teenager."

JOHN: "Scotch is bad for your kidneys."

PAUL: "How about you, Ringo? Don't you want someting to keep you awake while you're listening to all this rubbish?"

RINGO: "I'll have a Coke."

JOHN: "How about you, PLAYBOY? Are you a man or a woman?"

PAUL: "It's a Beatle people!"

GEORGE: "Who's your fave rave?"

PAUL: "I love 'you!'"

GEORGE: "How gear."

PLAYBOY: "Speaking of fave raves, why do you think the rock 'n roll phenomenon is bigger in England than in America?"

JOHN: "Is it?"

PAUL: "Yes. You see, in England... after us... you have thousands of groups coming out everywhere, but in America they've just sort of had the same groups going for ages. Some have made it and some haven't, but there aren't really any new ones. If we'd been over there instead of over here, there probably would have been the same upsurge over there. Our road manager made an interesting point the other day about this difference in America. In America the people who are big stars are not our age. There's nobody who's really a big star around our age. Possibly it may seem like a small point, but there's no conscription... no draft... here. In America, we used to hear about somebody like Elvis, who was a very big star and then suddenly he was off to the Army."

JOHN: "And the Everly Brothers."

PAUL: "Yes, the Everly Brothers as well went into the Army at the height of their fame. And the Army seems to do something to singers. It may make them think that what they're playing is stupid and childish. Or it may make them want to change their style, and consequently they may not be as popular when they come out of the Army. It may also make people forget them, and consequently they may have a harder job getting back on top when they get out. But here, of course, we don't have that problem."

JOHN: "Except those who go to prison."

PAUL: "It's become so easy to form a group nowadays, and to make a record, that hundreds are doing it-- and making a good living at it. Whereas when we started, it took us a couple of years before record companies would even listen to us, never mind give us a contract. But now, you just walk in and if they think you're OK, you're on."

PLAYBOY: "Do you think you had anything to do with bringing all this about?"

JOHN: "It's a damn fact."

PAUL: "Not only us. Us and people who followed us. But we were the first really to get national coverage because of some big shows that we did, and because of alot of public interest in us."

PLAYBOY: "What do you think is the most important element of your success... the personal appearances, or the records?"

JOHN: "Records. Records have always been the main thing. P.A.'s follow records. Our first records were made, and then we appeared."

PLAYBOY: "Followed closely by Beatle Dolls. Have you seen them?"

GEORGE: They're actually life size, you know."

PLAYBOY: "The ones we've seen are only about five inches high."

PAUL: "Well, we're midgets, you see."

PLAYBOY: "How does it make you feel to have millions of effigies of yourselves decorating bedsides all over the world? Don't you feel honored to have been immortalized in plastic? After all, there's no such thing as a Frank Sinatra doll, or an Elvis Presley doll."

GEORGE: "Who'd want an ugly old crap doll like that?"

PLAYBOY: "Would you prefer a George doll, George?"

GEORGE: "No, but I've got a Ringo doll at home."

PLAYBOY: "Did you know that you're probably the first public figures to have dolls made of them... except maybe Yogi Berra?"

JOHN: "In Jellystone Park. Do you mean the cartoon?"

PLAYBOY: "No. Didn't you know that the cartoon character is based on a real person... Yogi Berra, the baseball player?"

GEORGE: "Oh."

PLAYBOY: "Didn't you know that?"

JOHN: "I didn't know that."

PAUL: "Well, they're making 'us' into a cartoon, too, in the states. It's a series."

JOHN: "The highest achievement you could ever get."

PAUL: "We feel proud and humble."

PLAYBOY: "Did you know, George, that at the corner of 47th Street and Broadway in New York, there is a giant cutout of you on display?"

GEORGE: "Of me?"

PLAYBOY: "Life size."

RINGO: "Nude."

PLAYBOY: "No... but the reason we mention it is that this is really a signal honor. For years on that corner, there's been a big store with life-size cutouts of Marilyn Monroe, Anita Ekberg, or Jayne Mansfield in the window."

JOHN: "And now it's George."

PAUL: "The only difference is that they've got bigger tits."

RINGO: "I suppose that's one way of putting it."

GEORGE: "The party's getting rough. I'm going to bed. You carry on, though. I'll just stop my ears with cotton... so as not to hear the insults and smutty language."

PLAYBOY: "We've just about run out of steam, anyway."

JOHN: "Do you have all you need?"

PLAYBOY: "Enough. Many thanks, fellows."

JOHN: "'Course alot of it you won't be able to use-- 'crap' and 'bloody' and 'tit' and 'bastard' and all."

PLAYBOY: "Wait and see."

RINGO: "Finish your scotch before you go."

JOHN: "You don't mind if I climb into bed, do you? I'm frazzled."

PLAYBOY: "Not at all. Good night."

RINGO: "Good night, PLAYBOY."

GEORGE: "It's been a hard day's night."

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